

## 2013 Maryland FMP Report (July 2014)

### Section 16. Scup (*Stenotomus chrysops*)

#### Chesapeake Bay FMP

Scup harvest in Maryland is minimal, compared to other Atlantic Coast states, and is highly variable among years. Scup are rarely caught by recreational anglers. No Chesapeake Bay Program fishery management plan (FMP) has been developed for scup. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources' authority to manage scup as a species in need of conservation was established in 1994.<sup>1</sup>

Scup are jointly managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC). The ASMFC manages scup fisheries in state waters (out to three miles) while the MAFMC manages scup fisheries in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore). Scup were incorporated into the ASMFC and MAFMC summer flounder FMPs in 1996. Since then, a series of amendments and addenda have been implemented to modify management measures.

ASMFC Addendum IV (2001) established procedures that simplified, clarified, and expedited the setting and implementation of fishery specifications. Addendum V (2002) established state-specific quota for the summer fishery. Addenda III (2001), VII (2002), IX (2003), XI (2004), and XIII (2004) implemented catch and minimum size limits for recreational fisheries. Addendum XVI (2005) established measures to ensure prompt implementation of compliance requirements. Addendum XX (2009) clarified the procedures for state-to-state quota transfers. MAFMC established an initial overfishing definition with Amendment 12 in 1999. In 2007, the MAFMC established a rebuilding plan with Amendment 14, established annual catch limits and accountability measures with Amendment 15 (2011), and modified the accountability measures with Amendment 19 (2014). Several frameworks (addenda) have been implemented since 1996.

#### Stock Status

The ASMFC 2012 scup stock assessment determined that as of 2011, scup are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring relative to the revised biological reference points (BRPs).<sup>2</sup> The current BRPs are a threshold fishing mortality ( $F_{40\%}$ ) of 0.177 and a target spawning stock biomass ( $SSB_{40\%}$ ) of 203 million pounds. Fishing mortality in 2011 was estimated to be 0.034. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be 420 million lbs in 2011.<sup>2</sup> The 2011 year class (age-0) was estimated to be 150 million fish, which is above the time series average.<sup>2</sup>

#### Current Management Measures

The majority of coastwide scup harvest is allocated to the commercial fishery (78%). The remaining 22% of harvest is allocated to the recreational fishery.<sup>3</sup> Maryland's commercial fishery is open all year with a minimum size limit of 9" in state waters<sup>3</sup> and 9" in Federal waters.<sup>4</sup> All commercial harvesters in federal waters must have a federal permit.

The annual coastwide commercial quota is divided among three fishing seasons: January-April (Winter I = 45%), May-October (Summer = 39%), and November-December (Winter II = 16%).<sup>4</sup> Winter fisheries are managed with trip limits. Winter I is 50,000 pounds per trip until 80% of quota is caught at which point it will drop to 1,000 pounds per trip.<sup>5</sup> Winter II landings were set at 12,000 pounds per trip.<sup>5</sup> The summer fishery in state waters is managed by quota; Maryland's allocation is 0.012%.<sup>6,7</sup> There are no state quotas for federal waters. Fishing gear mesh size and escape panel regulations have been enacted for the commercial fishery.

Recreational harvest regulations differ between state and federal waters. In Maryland, the minimum size limit is 8" with a possession limit of 50 fish per person per day.<sup>3</sup> The state fishery is open all year. In federal waters, the minimum size is 9".<sup>8</sup> The 9" minimum size limit requirement also applies to the Party and Charter boat fisheries. The federal creel limit is 30 fish per person per day.

#### The Fisheries

In Maryland, commercial scup harvest is in winter as part of the mixed black sea bass/scup/summer flounder fishery. Scup are primarily harvested by trawl, although, juveniles are often caught in black sea bass pots. Scup harvest can be highly variable among years (Figure 1). Estimated commercial scup harvest was 54,200 pounds in 2011; 8,260 pounds in 2012; and 315,400 pounds in 2013 (Figure 1).<sup>9,10</sup> However, commercial scup landings publically available are limited because some of the data are confidential.

Recreational landings data are not available for much of the 1980s and 1990s (Figure 2). The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) estimated that recreational anglers harvested 18 scup in 2010, 11 scup in 2011,<sup>9</sup> and 0 scup through 2013<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2). The mean proportional standard error (PSE) for these harvest data was 71. A PSE value greater than 50 indicates a very imprecise estimate.

#### Issues/Concerns

Maryland commercial scup harvest has not returned to pre-1970 levels. Scup landings occur offshore and are highly. Larger-sized scup are uncommon in Maryland's commercial and recreational fisheries.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1. The commercial harvest of scup in Maryland since 1950.<sup>9,10</sup> Harvest data is not available for the years 1996, 2001-2003, and 2006-2008.

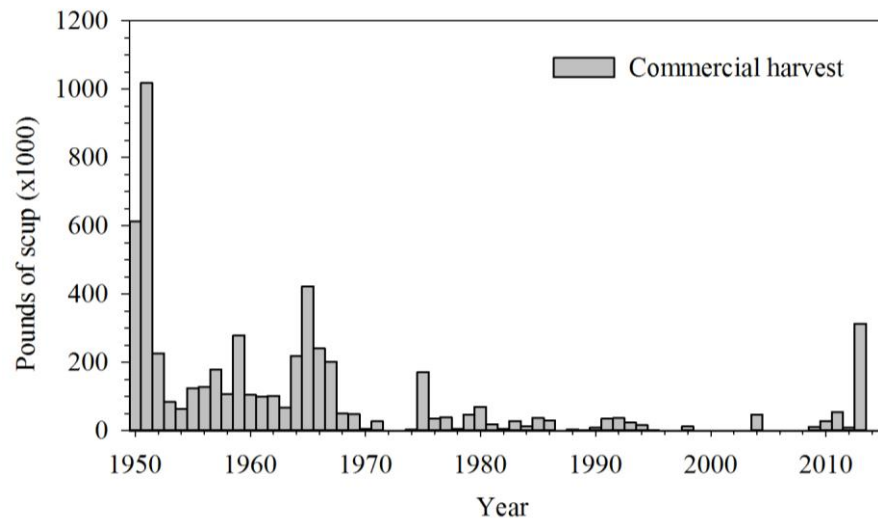
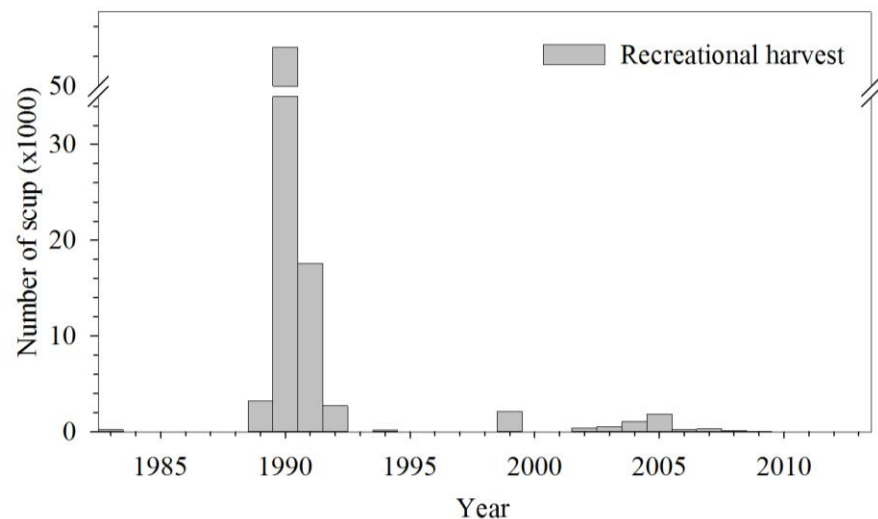


Figure 2. The recreational scup harvest in Maryland since 1983.<sup>9</sup> Landings data is not available for the years 1984-1988, 1993, and 1995-1997.



## References

- <sup>1</sup> Maryland Office of the Secretary of the State. COMAR 08.02.12.03. Retrieved July 25, 2011: <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/08/08.02.12.03.htm>
- <sup>2</sup> Terceiro M. 2012. Stock Assessment of Scup for 2012. US Dept Commerce, Northeast Fisheries Science Center Ref Doc. 12-21;148p. Available from: National Marine Fisheries Service, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026, or online at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/>
- <sup>3</sup> Doctor, S. 2014. Maryland's 2013 annual compliance report for scup. Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Stevensville, MD.
- <sup>4</sup> Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. 2013. Scup Advisory Panel Information Document. <http://static.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/52444638e4b0bb95409582fb/1380206136186/Scup%20AP%20FPR%20Info%20Doc%20August%202013.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service. (2014). Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fisheries; 2014 Summer Flounder Specifications; 2015 Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Specifications; 2014 Research Set-Aside Projects (Federal Register No. 79(61)).
- <sup>6</sup> Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2002. Addendum V to the scup fishery management plan: Summer period commercial scup allocation. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Washington, DC.
- <sup>7</sup> Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2009. Addendum XX to the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fishery management plan: Commercial quota transfer provisions for black sea bass and scup (summer period only). Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Washington, DC.
- <sup>8</sup> Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. Title 50: Wildlife and Fisheries Part 648—Fisheries of the Northeastern United States subpart H—Management measures for the scup fishery. <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=75474a17e0e7af28b27d410fa98a66ef&ty=HTML&h=L&n=50y12.0.1.1.5&r=PART#50:12.0.1.1.5.8>. Washington, DC.
- <sup>9</sup> Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division. May 21, 2013: <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/index>.

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication from the NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Regional Office.  
May 21, 2013: [http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/reports\\_frame.htm](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/reports_frame.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Doctor, S. 2013. Maryland's 2012 annual compliance report for scup. Maryland  
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